ten the *Journals* are a revelation in this regard. For instance, before 1902 Gide notes his inability to find a single sentence spoken by Christ that authorizes the family, and again in 1921 he records his observation that of some forty families he knows particularly well there are hardly four in which the parents* actions do not make it desirable for the child to escape their influence. Likewise in the case of the novel within the novel (a complication that Gide had already broached in seven earlier works), the *Journals* contain a revealing passage dated 1893 about the transposition of the subject of a work into the work itself (as in the play scene in *Hamlet* or in certain Dutch paintings).

However fascinating the composition of the novel may be and however complicated the interweaving of themes, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* strikes the reader most forcibly as a study of the free individual in opposition to the institution of the family. Once again Andre Gide's long preoccupation with self-realization fuses with his equally permanent concern with the nature of virtue. As we watch the evolution of the numerous characters, particularly the young Bernard and Olivier, we are reminded of the author's own early search for a rule of conduct that should combine expression and restraint. His particularly admirable form of equilibrium has nothing static about it.

The definition of virtue and the problem of self-realization are so fundamental in Gide's work as to make of him a *moraliste* or moral philosopher in the best French tradition. "The only drama that really interests me," he wrote in his *Journals* in 1930, "and that I should always be willing to depict anew, is the debate of the individual with whatever keeps him from being authentic, with whatever is opposed to his integrity, to his integration. Most often the obstacle is within him. And

all the rest is merely accidental.'* This is a capital text for the understanding of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* as of all his literary work. Bernard Profitendieu is not the only protagonist to wrestle with the angel, nor Promethee the only one upon whom an eagle feeds.

But this text is also — since the obstacle is not always within the individual — a key to Andre Gide's social preoccupations. Having from his earliest years enjoyed an enviable economic independence permitting a life devoted wholly to disinterested art, he could have ignored such concerns. Had he remained faithful to the doctrines of pure art current during the nineties, he would have done so. But with his discovery of life beyond the confines of the *cenacles* came also a sense of responsibility and solidarity. His keenly sympathetic nature and anxiety for freedom caused him to become increasingly a champion of the oppressed. As mayor of a Commune in Normandy (1896), later as a juror in Rouen (1912), and finally as a special envoy of the Colonial Ministry (1925-6), he had ample opportunity to observe social injustice. His *Voyage au Congo* and *Retour $u Tchad,* in fact, led to legal reform